

# 2014



# EFL NEWS

# 2014

ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Week Thirteen

Week Thirteen

January 18, 2015



ICC	30	VIR	7	MOH	41	MVM	20	SCB	28	AUR	17	DTL	41	COW	23	SBE	14	GWG	27
CHP	7	TCT	31	CAR	28	CHI	38	LAK	3	MAR	13	PIC	24	YOR	20	SC	17	SEB	24



**Cowabunga!**

*Ben Ogbonnaya* of Cowtown lunges for the goal line while *Ryan Clark* tries to hold him back. The score was the first touchdown of the game and held up until a York rally in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter put the home team in front. But the Corn Kings rallied behind *Joe Flacco* and emerged with a 23-20 win that keeps them in the middle of a three-way race for the final wild card berth in the Can-am Conference. (STORY INSIDE).

**LATEST EFL NEWS INSIDE**

- CORN KINGS CROWN YORK
- LIZARDS LASH SPARTANS
- LATE CHARGE BY 'STANGS STINGS STARS
- AND MUCH MORE.....

**Also in this issue**

- SPATS FEATURE -
- 'FORT COLUMBIA,' 'THE GREEK CIVIL WAR,' 'AROUND THE EFL.'
- JIMMY THE GEEK
- THIS WEEK IN EFL HISTORY



*Who was slick in Week Thirteen?*

**"BRYLCREEM" THE EFL'S FIRST SPONSOR**



**LeSean McCoy**  
RB  
Gwinnett  
Gladiators

33 Carries, 171 yards, 2 TDs. Efforts sparked rare Glads win.



**LaVonte David**  
OLB  
Carthage  
Cannibals

12 Tackles, 4 Sacks, 1 TFL, 3 FF. Carthage did not lose due to him.



7-6-0

# Cowtown

## 23

### MVP

#### Joe Flacco

## 20



7-6-0

# York



## GAME OF THE WEEK

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Flacco	20	34	179	2
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Morris	25	162	6.5	0
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Shorts	6	67	11.2	1

Team	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
Cowtown	3	0	13	7	-	23
York	3	3	0	14	-	20

### TEAM LEADERS

Passing	Cmp	Att	Yds	TD
Brady	14	29	197	1
Rushing	Car	Yds	Avg	TD
Lynch	25	92	3.7	1
Receiving	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD
Benjamin	5	121	24.2	0

### Play of the Game

Facing 1<sup>st</sup> & goal at the York 10, trailing by 4 points with 0:31 left in the game and his primary receiver doubled, **Joe Flacco** checked down to **Cecil Shorts** in the end zone for the game-winning TD.

**SUMMARY:** In a critical game for both teams' playoff hopes, the Excaliburs opened with a 52-yard FG drive then appeared to get the ball back immediately when **Geno Atkins** sacked **Joe Flacco** and forced a fumble. But a video review showed Flacco's arm was moving forward, nullifying the turnover. Cowtown took advantage of the break and marched 64 yards to a FG to tie it at 3. The defences took over at that point, with York breaking the deadlock on a 42-yard FG by **Blair Walsh** after **Von Miller** had sacked Flacco for an 11-yard loss on 4<sup>th</sup> down. Half time adjustments paid off for Cowtown; they drove 70 yards to open the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, with a 39-yard run by **Alfred Morris** setting up an 8-yard check down TD pass from Flacco to **Ben Ogbonnaya** to make it 10-6. An interception by **Terrance Newman** and a sack by **Justin Smith** near the York goal line set up the Kings for a pair of FGs to give them a 16-6 lead after 3 quarters. But **Tom Brady** caught fire in the 4<sup>th</sup>, connecting with **Kelvin Benjamin** for 58 yards to set up a 9-yard TD pass to **Delanie Walker** then benefitted from 2 pass interference calls to drive for the go-ahead TD with 3:26 left in the game. But Flacco came through in the clutch, finishing off a methodical 80-yard drive with passes of 15 yards and 10 yards to **Cecil Shorts** for the game-winning TD.

**QUOTES:** "This was a big win for us. They weren't giving us much room. I think Alfred loosened them up a bit with those two big runs of his. If he doesn't make those runs, maybe they play the pass all day and maybe it doesn't go so well for us." – Cowtown QB, **Joe Flacco**.  
 "You win some, you lose some. We played well; but missed too many tackles, didn't get a good push up front from the offensive line either. We gave up bad sacks and left Shorts uncovered in the end zone. Otherwise, all good." – York coach, **Jay Hammond**, asked about the difference in the game.



### HAPPY FAN

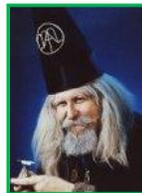


### titter

### ANGRY FAN



**Bobbie Sue 77@CKFanatic5**  
 In Shorts, it was a Flacctastic game I want to see Morris of!



**Merlin @MerlinRTchronicle**  
 Verily doth the stalk cut down the scythe from the very hands of Sir Brady in a most surprising fashion!

01-15-2015 Camelot Temp: 49 Wind: 0-10 MVP: **Joe Flacco**

#### Scoring Summary

1 10:31	York	FG Walsh 39 (10-52-4:21)	0-3
1 4:00	Cowtown	FG Novak 34 (15-64-6:24)	3-3
2 4:04	York	FG Walsh 42 (7-26-2:52)	3-6
3 11:37	Cowtown	TD Flacco 8 pass to Ogbonnaya (Novak) (5-70-3:15)	10-6
3 9:07	Cowtown	FG Novak 33 (5-9-1:36)	13-6
3 1:13	Cowtown	FG Novak 51 (4-8-2:02)	16-6
4 14:16	York	TD Brady 9 pass to Walker (Walsh) (5-80-1:57)	16-13
4 3:26	York	TD Lynch 6 run (Walsh) (17-76-6:03)	16-20
4 0:24	Cowtown	TD Flacco 10 pass to Shorts III (Novak) (11-80-3:02)	23-20

	COW	YOR
First Downs	18	18
Rushes	31-189	28-101
Passes	34-20-179	29-14-197
Sacked	2-16	6-47
Fumble	2	1
Penalties	9-64	4-10
Turnovers	1	2
Missed Tackles	5	10
Blitzes	23	16
Time	29:36	30:24
Third Down	5-15	3-14
Fourth Down	0-1	0-0
Red Att/Td/Fg	4/2/2	2/2/0
Net Offense	352	251



**EFL**  
ELITE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

# QUICK COUNTS!!

Blue 35, Blue 35, hut, hut hut! Red 23, 3, Red 23, 3, hut, hut, hut! Green 49, hut!



**T-LIZARDS**

9-4-0

14

10

7

10

0

**41**

OT

**Toby Gerhart**

13 Carries, 116 yards, 2 TDs



**SPARTANS**

9-4-0

3

7

7

7

0

**24**

**Peyton Manning**

24 of 37, 271 yards, 1 TD

**Toby Gerhart** rushed for 118 yards and 2 TDs and added a TD catch to lead a strong attack from the Durham offence. Gerhart converted the Lizards' first two TD drives with runs of 18 yards and 3 yards while the Durham secondary held **Peyton Manning** in check. **Nick Foles** finished off the 1<sup>st</sup> half major scoring with a 5-yard TD pass to **T.Y. Hilton** and **Phil Dawson** added a 46-yard FG to make it 24-10 Durham. The Lizards continued strong in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter with Foles checking down to Gerhart for a 9-yard TD pass to make it 31-10 then the D holding off a Spartans' comeback attempt.



**VIOLATORS**

6-7-0

0

0

7

0

0

**7**

OT

**Ben Tate**

17 Carries, 98 yards, 1 TD



**TRIUMPH**

9-4-0

7

14

7

3

0

**31**

**Doug Martin**

21 Carries, 114 yards, 2 TDs

The Triumph capitalized on four Virden turnovers; a leaping interception by **Bobby Wagner** turned aside a promising Virden drive and set up the first score, a 3-yard TD run by **Doug Martin**. Then a diving interception by **Kevin Burnett** and a **Matt Stafford** fumble at the end of a 10-yard scramble set up TD passes of 3 yards to **Antonio Brown** and 16 yards to **Kendall Wright** to make it 21-0 Triumph at half time. At the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half **Matt Stafford** threw his third pick of the game to set up an 18-yard TD run by Martin, making it 28-0 for TC. **Ben Tate** scored Virden's only TD on a 12-yard run.



**SLUGGS**

10-3-0

0

14

14

0

0

**28**

OT

**RGIII**

14 of 24, 235 yards, 2 TDs



**KNIGHTS**

0-13-0

3

0

0

0

0

**3**

**Le'Veon Bell**

29 Carries, 116 yards

The Knights held the ball for close to 12 minutes to start the game and came away with a 35-yard **Rian Lindell** FG for their efforts. LA would not come close to scoring again until late in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter as the Banana Sluggs controlled both sides of the ball for the middle two frames. **Knowshon Moreno** carried it in twice in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, from 8 yards and 6 yards, to give the Sluggs a 14-0 half time lead. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter it was time to shine for **RGIII** as he connected on scoring strikes of 50 yards to **Andre Johnson** and 26 yards to **DeAndre Hopkins** to give Santa Clara a comfortable win.

Blue 35, Blue 35, hut, hut hut! Red 23, 3, Red 23, 3, hut, hut, hut! Green 49, hut!



**HELLFIRE**  
2-11-0

7	14	14	6	0	<b>41</b>
OT					

**Andrew Luck**  
21 of 28, 282 yards, 3 TDs



**CANNIBALS**  
10-3-0

7	7	7	7	0	<b>28</b>
OT					

**Philip Rivers**  
26 of 49, 382 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs

**Eddie Lacy** caught a check down and rumbled 36 yards to set up his own 2-yard TD run to give Carthage a 7-0 lead. The Hellfire responded with a TD drive to tie it then took charge after an 80-yard punt return for a TD by **Tandon Doss** gave them a 14-7 lead in the 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Andrew Luck** connected deep with **Harry Douglas** for a 35-yard TD before half time then capped the 1<sup>st</sup> drive of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with an 8-yard TD pass to **Robert Woods** to make it 28-14. A 30-yard pick-six by **Dawan Landry** made it 35-14 Hellfire. **Philip Rivers** threw a pair of TD passes but a late pick snuffed out the comeback.



**MUSTANGS**  
13-0-0

7	0	3	7	0	<b>17</b>
OT					

**Matt Forte**  
130 rush yards, 89 receiving yards



**NORTH STARS**  
6-7-0

7	3	0	3	0	<b>13</b>
OT					

**Calais Campbell**  
3 Ts, 1 Sack, 2 PD, 1 punt block

**Calais Campbell** blocked a punt and **Bennie Logan** recovered it in the end zone to give Markham a 7-0 lead early in the 1<sup>st</sup>. Interceptions of **Matt Ryan** by **DeAngelo Hall** and **George Iloka** kept the Aurora offence at bay early, but a 4-yard TD run by **Darrel Young** late in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter tied it for Aurora. Markham sustained a drive that ended with a 49-yard FG by **Josh Brown** to steal the lead before the half. The teams traded FGs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, giving Markham a 13-10 lead. But an **Earl Thomas** pick of **Alex Smith** in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter set a 29-yard TD pass to **Riley Cooper** to win it for Aurora.



**BLUE EAGLES**  
3-10-0

7	7	0	0	0	<b>14</b>
OT					

**Terrelle Pryor**  
13 of 27, 120 yards, 1 TD



**REGULATORS**  
7-6-0

0	7	0	7	3	<b>17</b>
OT					

**Tony Romo**  
26 of 43, 246 yards, 2 TDs, 2 INTs

**Will Hill** picked off **Tony Romo** on the game's opening drive and **Terrelle Pryor** hooked up with **Brandon Marshall** for a 30-yard pass play to set up a 3-yard TD run by **LaMichael James** to give Scarborough a 7-0 lead. Romo rebounded with a 4-yard TD pass to **Keenan Allen** to tie it, but gave it back with a pick by **Brandon Carr**, setting up a 5-yard TD pass to **DeSean Jackson** for a 14-7 lead. 7 straight punts started the 2<sup>nd</sup> half before the Regs finally tied it on a 15-yard TD pass to **Ladarius Green**. The game ended it OT on a bad snap to **Dustin Colquitt** that set up a 33-yard Regs' FG for the win.

Blue 35, Blue 35, hut, hut hut! Red 23, 3, Red 23, 3, hut, hut, hut! Green 49, hut!



**MONARCHS**  
4-9-0

0	13	0	7	0	<b>20</b>
OT					

**Ryan Tannehill**  
21 of 34, 178 yards, 2 TDs, 1 INT



**CONVICTS**  
9-4-0

14	0	10	14	0	<b>38</b>
OT					

**Cam Newton**  
21 of 26, 281 yards, 3 TDs

The Convicts started fast; a 25-yard run by **Adrian Peterson** set up a 36-yard TD pass from **Cam Newton** to **Brian Hartline** then a 25-yard pass to **Roddy White** set up a 17-yard TD strike to **Greg Olsen** to make it 14-0 Chino. But 2 long drives by the Monarchs led to a pair of FGs then a punt block by **Michael Brockers** set up a 4-yard TD pass from **Ryan Tannehill** to **Logan Paulsen** to narrow the Chino lead to 14-13 at the half. A Chino FG early in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, followed by a **Julius Peppers** interception that led to a 2-yard TD run by Peterson broke the game decisively for the home team.



**CUBS**  
9-4-0

3	10	14	3	0	<b>30</b>
OT					

**Colin Kaepernick**  
11 of 21, 159 yards, 1 TD, 1 rTD



**PATRIOTS**  
3-10-0

0	7	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
OT					

**Blake Bortles**  
14 of 26, 139 yards, 1 INT

Rookie halfback, **Bishop Sankey** broke a 23-yard run to set up a 44-yard **Greg Zuerlein** FG to open the scoring then **Colin Kaepernick** swept around left end for a 33-yard TD run to put the Cubs ahead 10-0 early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. The Pats struck back with a 2-yard TD run by **Chris Ivory** but fell behind further in the 3<sup>rd</sup> when an 80-yard Cubs' drive ended with **Trent Richardson** bowling into the end zone from inches out. A tip and interception by **Muhammad Wilkerson** set up a 12-yard TD pass to **Tony Gonzalez** to make it 27-7 Cubs and prompt a slowdown offence the rest of the way.



**GLADIATORS**  
4-9-0

7	0	10	10	0	<b>27</b>
OT					

**LeSean McCoy**  
33 Carries, 171 yards, 2 TDs



**SWORDFISH**  
3-10-0

0	10	7	7	0	<b>24</b>
OT					

**DeMurray**  
14 Carries, 65 yards

**LeSean McCoy** rushed for 62 yards of a 95-yard scoring drive, finishing it with a 2-yard TD run to give the Glads the early edge. But a Sebastian FG followed by a successful inside kick preceded a 29-yard TD pass from **Andy Dalton** to **Wes Welker** to give the Fish a 10-7 half time lead. The lead traded hands with **Ben Roethlisberger** putting the Glads on top with a 21-yard TD pass to **Lance Moore** then Dalton seizing it back for the Fish with a 26-yard TD to Welker. Two **Shaun Suisham** FGs put Gwinnett in front 20-17 before a 78-yard drive ending with a 2-yard McCoy TD run sealed the win.

## WEEK THIRTEEN STANDINGS

East	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Carthage	10	3	0	0.769	408	31.4	363	27.9	3.5	6 1 0	4 1 0	7 2 0
Twin Cities	9	4	0	0.692	316	24.3	259	19.9	4.4	4 2 0	5 1 0	7 2 0
Virden	6	7	0	0.462	374	28.8	337	25.9	2.8	4 2 0	1 5 0	3 6 0
Charleswood	3	10	0	0.231	197	15.2	362	27.8	-12.7	3 4 0	2 3 0	2 7 0
Mohave	2	11	0	0.154	312	24	419	32.2	-8.2	0 6 0	2 4 0	2 7 0
West	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Santa Clara	10	3	0	0.769	430	33.1	301	23.2	9.9	5 1 0	6 0 0	9 0 0
Chino	9	4	0	0.692	363	27.9	285	21.9	6	6 1 0	4 1 0	6 3 0
Iowa City	9	4	0	0.692	391	30.1	341	26.2	3.8	5 2 0	3 2 0	6 3 0
Mission Viejo	4	9	0	0.308	267	20.5	341	26.2	-5.7	3 4 0	1 5 0	3 6 0
Los Angeles	0	13	0	0	178	13.7	394	30.3	-16.6	0 6 0	0 6 0	0 9 0
North	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Durham	9	4	0	0.692	412	31.7	272	20.9	10.8	5 1 0	5 1 0	7 2 0
Pickering	9	4	0	0.692	381	29.3	305	23.5	5.8	4 2 0	3 3 0	5 4 0
Cowtown	7	6	0	0.538	323	24.8	344	26.5	-1.6	3 3 0	3 3 0	4 5 0
York	7	6	0	0.538	280	21.5	263	20.2	1.3	3 4 0	1 4 0	4 5 0
Markham	6	7	0	0.462	268	20.6	258	19.8	0.8	3 4 0	2 3 0	4 5 0
South	W	L	T	Pct	Pts	Ave	Opp	Ave	Diff	Home	Div	Conf
Aurora (z)	13	0	0	1	436	33.5	161	12.4	21.2	7 0 0	5 0 0	9 0 0
South Carolina	7	6	0	0.538	317	24.4	321	24.7	-0.3	4 3 0	4 1 0	5 4 0
Gwinnett	4	9	0	0.308	266	20.5	354	27.2	-6.8	1 5 0	3 3 0	4 5 0
Scarborough	3	10	0	0.231	248	19.1	334	25.7	-6.6	0 7 0	1 5 0	2 7 0
Sebastian	3	10	0	0.231	251	19.3	404	31.1	-11.8	1 5 0	1 5 0	1 8 0

(z)-clinched division

(y)-clinched wildcard

## PASSING

#	Player	Team	Att	Cmp	C%	Yards	In	I%	Lg	TD	TD%	Rate
1	Manning, P	PIC	386	251	65	3381	8	2.1	80	33	8.5	112.6
2	Brees	DTL	206	151	73.3	1757	4	1.9	66	11	5.3	108.4
3	Foles	DTL	222	140	63.1	1852	2	0.9	57	14	6.3	106.7
4	Newton, C	CHI	389	273	70.2	2778	4	1	47	23	5.9	105.7
5	Cutler	TCT	254	170	66.9	1936	8	3.1	42	22	8.7	105.4
6	Griffin III	SCB	355	223	62.8	3071	5	1.4	73	22	6.2	105.3
7	Rivers, P	CAR	430	279	64.9	3968	13	3	75	29	6.7	104.5
8	Wilson, R	ICC	312	215	68.9	2594	6	1.9	69	17	5.4	104.3
9	Ryan, M	AUR	500	330	66	3674	10	2	76	33	6.6	101.4
10	Stafford, M	VV	422	261	61.8	3726	12	2.8	80	21	5	95.2
11	Smith, A	MAR	334	205	61.4	2097	3	0.9	48	17	5.1	92.6
12	Romo	SC	532	333	62.6	3378	11	2.1	71	26	4.9	88.4
13	Flacco	COW	481	291	60.5	3476	17	3.5	80	27	5.6	86.6
14	Luck	MOH	454	265	58.4	3235	9	2	77	19	4.2	86.1
15	Glennon	LAK	220	137	62.3	1282	2	0.9	55	7	3.2	85.1
16	Roethlisberger	GWG	405	247	61	2733	13	3.2	63	18	4.4	82.5
17	Brady	YOR	371	209	56.3	2628	10	2.7	73	15	4	80.8
18	Manziel	TCT	230	140	60.9	1489	6	2.6	45	8	3.5	80.5
19	Rodgers, A	SBE	237	141	59.5	1622	8	3.4	54	10	4.2	80.2
20	Dalton	SS	442	250	56.6	2659	8	1.8	74	17	3.8	79.6

## RUSHING

#	Player	Team	Att	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	McCoy, L	GWG	300	1306	4.4	56	10
2	Johnson, C	PIC	272	1301	4.8	35	5
3	Morris, A	COW	232	1245	5.4	48	6
4	Lynch, M	YOR	251	1165	4.6	48	10
5	Charles, J	VV	234	1088	4.6	51	11
6	Moreno	SCB	209	1052	5	24	17
7	Gore	SC	203	1006	5	56	9
8	Murray	MVM	214	953	4.5	62	9
9	Lacy	CAR	210	948	4.5	57	14
10	Peterson, A	CHI	200	933	4.7	31	13
11	Forte	AUR	208	929	4.5	55	12
12	Spiller	ICC	144	848	5.9	55	4
13	Bell, L	LAK	225	824	3.7	44	1
14	Ivory	CHP	199	785	3.9	50	6
15	Blount	CAR	162	680	4.2	24	5
16	Ball, M	MOH	132	648	4.9	50	6
17	Pryor	SBE	79	625	7.9	36	4
18	Ellington	MAR	120	599	5	43	3
19	Rice, R	SBE	163	590	3.6	62	5
20	Ridley	SCB	116	568	4.9	26	7

## RECEIVING

#	Player	Team	No	Yds	Ave	Lg	TD
1	Bryant, D	VV	91	1472	16.2	50	10
2	Brown, A	TCT	90	984	10.9	45	11
3	Green, A	SC	86	1114	13	71	8
4	Edelman	AUR	79	770	9.7	52	11
5	Boldin	AUR	77	1345	17.5	76	14
6	Johnson, A	SCB	76	1057	13.9	50	4
7	Wright, K	TCT	74	732	9.9	35	7
8	Graham, J	MOH	71	1014	14.3	65	6
9	Jackson, V	TCT	70	1174	16.8	42	10
10	Garcon	PIC	69	945	13.7	71	15
11	Olsen	CHI	69	638	9.2	36	7
12	Jackson, D	SBE	68	991	14.6	60	8
13	Woodhead	CHI	68	564	8.3	35	4
14	Douglas, H	MOH	67	777	11.6	40	5
15	Forte	AUR	65	460	7.1	41	4
16	Jennings, G	SC	64	602	9.4	58	7
17	Allen, K	SC	64	713	11.1	34	4
18	Jeffery	SCB	62	999	16.1	65	12
19	Watkins, S	CHP	62	845	13.6	71	5
20	Thomas, D	PIC	62	1091	17.6	80	9

## KICKING

#	Player	Team	FGA	FGM	FG%	40	50	Lg	Pts
1	Zuerlein	ICC	40	37	92.5	13	4	52	149
2	Crosby	VV	33	29	87.9	8	3	54	126
3	Folk	AUR	25	22	88	14	7	55	118
4	Prater	MOH	32	28	87.5	7	3	56	114
5	Dawson	DTL	21	21	100	7	2	57	112
6	Henery	SCB	23	20	87	7	1	50	112
7	Hauschka	CAR	25	20	80	9	2	53	108
8	Bailey, D	CHI	28	21	75	12	2	52	105
9	Novak	COW	24	21	87.5	7	2	56	97
10	Brown, J	MAR	26	22	84.6	11	5	53	94
11	Feely	SBE	28	22	78.6	5	1	52	92
12	Tucker, J	SC	23	17	73.9	7	2	54	89
13	Walsh	YOR	25	19	76	6	3	54	86
14	Vinatieri	SS	21	18	85.7	5	2	54	81
15	Carpenter	MVM	19	16	84.2	4	1	53	79
16	Gostkowski	TCT	13	13	100	6	0	49	76
17	Suisham	GWG	16	14	87.5	5	0	47	74
18	Bironas	CHP	15	12	80	6	2	53	59
19	Janikowski	PIC	6	5	83.3	0	0	38	58
20	Lindell	LAK	15	13	86.7	6	2	59	58



# AROUND THE



## With Spats McChad

NEW YORK – The assassination of 11 people in the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and the killing of a police officer outside has me thinking about journalism and satire in the increasingly terrifying world in which we live. Is there really such a thing as “free speech” at all? Is lampooning and ridiculing the fervently held religious beliefs of millions of people really that funny? If it is, it’s the kind of joke that could make you die laughing. Charb, if he were able to speak to us from beyond the grave, might tell us he asserted his right to free speech by drawing caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. But is it *free* speech if you pay for it with your life? Not everybody in this world is playing by the same rules. And now that this atrocity has been inflicted, the reaction to it is testing all of us in our individual resolve to defend freedom of expression.

I was shocked to read that so many young people in France, as well as leaders and prominent people from around the world, defended, or in some way justified, the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. While most were Muslim, a sizeable minority were not. My initial outraged gut reaction was to think “they should all be locked up.” Almost immediately I caught the irony: a journalist – one of the more irreverent ones in the football world in fact – condemning an expression of opinion as it were a criminal act. While distasteful, most of these opinions were not attempts to promote violent extremism, but rather attempts to explain the attacks in ways that suggested some measure of sympathy for the motives, if not the actions, of the gunmen.

In spite of communications technology shrinking the planet faster than a dip in the Arctic Ocean will shrink your willy, the West and the East still appear to be worlds apart in their thinking. We think nothing of “taking the piss” of our religious, political, and business leaders; or, in the professional sports media world, deconstructing the antics of delusional coaches, stupid fans, and spoiled players. Public and authority figures of all stripes are fair game here, and a good thing too – it keeps them somewhat honest. But the Muslim World, a place our leaders have taken an extensive interest in over the past century, has no such deep-rooted tradition of satire when it comes to religion. While many of us might not understand it, we definitely *know* the score by now. And, knowing it, I have to ask whether we have missed the point of free speech entirely by doggedly exercising our “right” to say anything we want, without pausing to consider whether saying it is *right*.

### FORT COLUMBIA

The fact that *Charlie Hebdo* knowingly pulled the tiger’s tail too often doesn’t mean that the tiger isn’t insane. The attack in Paris was chilling in its execution and horrifying in its outcome. On a lesser scale, but still frightening, a hatchet-wielding *jihadi* attacked four of New York’s Finest in the subway this past October, chopping one in the back of the head before being shot to death by the others. In Canada, separate attacks that same month two days apart killed two Canadian servicemen and forced Parliament Hill into lockdown. If it can happen in Canada, it can happen anywhere folks!

The threat of terror has organizers of this year’s EFL Championship Game in Columbia, well.....terrified. Fort Jackson is starting to show outward signs of becoming a real fort as advance parties of veteran combat and support units can be spotted apart from the thousands of trainees, conducting recon missions across the midlands region. FBI presence is noticeably higher too, which is not a good thing in view of their typically surreptitious role when conducting counter-terrorism. Local police are already being augmented by State Troopers, the National Guard is partially mobilized, and the Military Order of the Stars and Bars is guarding a fording point on the Broad River with a fully crewed civil war-era Confederate cannon.

All this military and para-military preparation will mean nothing if a “lone wolf” or a pack of lone wolves get inside the Carolina Slammer on game day with weapons and explosives. Some extraordinary measures are being considered to prevent this from happening. City Council is apparently fiercely debating a motion to temporarily ban mustard BBQ sauce, since it is reportedly one of the active ingredients in a bomb-making recipe available on the Internet using everyday household items. This emergency measure is vehemently opposed by **Clyde Bessinger**, grand nephew of the deceased founder of Maurice’s ‘Piggie Park,’ a Southern BBQ chain that uses mustard-based sauce exclusively. He claims the 6-week ban will force the chain out of business or force it to compromise on the quality of its BBQ by switching to tomato-based sauce – a switch that would offend the political and religious beliefs of he and his customers, who consider BBQ sauce “*a religion in these parts!*”

**Champ McGee** of Little Pigs Barbeque, however, supports the motion: “*When it comes to BBQ sauce, we are an interdenominational restaurant, serving every taste. Our mustard customers can enjoy our new yellow curry BBQ sauce, available for a limited time during the mustard ban. Our national security is at stake and Little Pigs is willing to do its part!*”

While the Southern BBQ sauce wars rage in the background, a Northerner is having a carpetbagger’s impact on

Southern sensibilities at the Carolina Slammer. Not wishing to leave anything to chance, **Hal Corson** has hired Atlantic City casino security expert, **Mario ‘Bada Bing’ Lupo** to organize stadium security for the main event. Mario has a reputation for getting any job done, under the strict condition that you don’t ask him how he did it. Mario’s first security measure was to interview the South Carolina cheerleaders, *The Regulettes*, “to see if they have Paki boyfriends that force them to cover themselves at home with those f%#\*ing towels,” as he apparently put it. “If those chicks aren’t real comfortable being naked, or nearly naked, they must be Paki plants!” Lupo reportedly told Corson, as the latter nodded, wide-eyed, in agreement.

Pointing to the long skirts and sweatshirts of the traditionally-garbed South Carolina cheerleaders, Lupo barked, “Look what they’re wearing! You can fit a couple bundles of dynamite under each of those skirts. There are a dozen of those bombshell babes out there. With two bundles of dynamite each, that’s, ah....ah...a lot of friggin’ dynamite! Those skirts and shirts have got to go!”

And so, **Mario ‘Bada Bing’ Lupo** went about changing the look of *The Regulettes* to conform to the new security standards then oversaw them practising their new routines in various stages of scantily-clad dress. “If these babes are Arab plants they’ll break down eventually as they strip!” he said to a bug-eyed **Hal Corson**, who nodded as the girls shed clothing bit by bit. “We just have to be patient and watch each one carefully!”

Bikers from the *The Outlaws* motorcycle gang have been spotted hanging around on the University of South Carolina Department of Theatre and Dance, the gymnasium, and at local establishments frequented by



The outfits of the original *Regulettes* (above) compared with the new security-cleared versions (below) have fans at the Carolina Slammer ready to do whatever it takes to ensure a safe and secure EFL Championship.

students. A few have appeared wearing ill-fitted suits during working hours at the security offices at the Carolina Slammer to meet with Lupo, who chuckles when he calls them, “the inlaws, because they’re part of the *Family*; if you know what I mean!”

This unexpected and unwelcome arrival of a “Yankee” rival apparently drew the ire of Carolina Slammer Head of Security, **Woodrow “Woody” Woodmason III**, who reportedly clashed with Lupo early in the north easterner’s contract but is holding his tongue ever since he awoke to a severed hog’s head in his bed. The head was covered in a heavy tomato-based BBQ sauce, making it unlikely to be the work of a local. The incident has raised the level of tension and paranoia around the stadium, giving it a fortress mentality still six weeks away from the big game. What Columbia will look like by then is anybody’s guess.

### **Εμφύλιος [Πόλεμος]**

At Thermopylae Stadium in Pickering another kind of civil war was raging. This one involved traditional rivals, the Thunder Lizards and the Spartans, in a crucial contest sure to go a long way toward deciding the eventual North Division winner. But this was more than just an important football game with a North American audience glued to the TV screen. This game was to also determine bragging rights in the all-important war of words, and occasional fisticuffs, between the pro-Pickering *Hellenic Cultural Centre* and the pro-Durham *Royal Greek Society*, two of the most prominent Greek-Canadian social clubs proudly supporting two prominent EFL franchises, both of which happen to be owned and operated by Greek-Canadians.

Rivals in everything, going back to the Greek Civil War of 1946, the war between the clubs has become especially heated since **Smota Platypusopoulos** of the *Royal Greek Society* accused **Vasilis Vasilinistusakas** of the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* of paving the way behind the scenes for the Spartans’ acquisition of **Peyton Manning** by his secret purchase of the small, beautiful and barely inhabited Greek Island of Flatulos for the Manning family that, according to a select few in the know, was the deal-maker that prompted the Championship-winning QB to agree to the trade.

Now, this type of “community assistance” is generally frowned upon, but it is not, strictly speaking, illegal. However, Platypusopoulos was incensed that, in a year when Durham appeared to be heading toward a long-awaited berth in the final, his arch-rival in the Greek Community would make a move to prop up a threatening, but weaker, Pickering team by adding the best quarterback in the league to its roster. He accused Vasilinistusakas of football sabotage, and of making the tzatziki sauce served

in his ‘Hellenic Heaven’ restaurants with plain American yogurt, a clearly inferior base for the iconic Greek condiment.

Vasilinistusakas blithely brushed aside the accusation of sabotage, but the charge of using the wrong yogurt was too much for a direct descendent of the fabled ‘Dairy Farmer to Olympus,’ **Kremali of Epirus**, to bear. Vasilis suggested that Platypusopoulos had Turkish blood in his veins and asserted that the lamb he uses for the souvlaki at his ‘Apollo’s Feast’ restaurants is often chewy and gristly. Such a claim levelled against the great-great-great grandson of the legendary Megalopian shepherd, **Grigoropoulos of Arcadia**, was an insult too grave to contemplate. Smota declared ‘Poet War’ on Vasilis, a little known but deeply traditional, mostly bloodless, form of conflict involving mutual character-assassination between two antagonists and their allies: in this case the *Hellenic Cultural Centre* of Pickering and the *Royal Greek Society* of Whitby.

**Smota Platypusopoulos** and about 1,000 members and friends of the *Royal Greek Society* crammed the single entrance to Thermopylae Stadium on game day, singing patriotic songs, dancing traditional pastoral dances, and pouring out cup after cup of rotten yogurt crudely labelled ‘Kremali’s Seed’ into garbage cans and sewers around the stadium. They all wore bulky coats with many layers and deep pockets stuffed with large harmonicas to set off the metal detectors in a ploy to slow down entry into the stadium. As game time approached and thousands of angry fans stood out front in a long line stretching for almost a mile, the ‘300 Spartans’ (a notorious Spartans fan club), fat and flush with beer after a 4-hour tailgate party, furiously stormed the gates and routed the remainder of Platypusopoulos’ forces. Ticket sellers ran for safety as enraged fans poured inside and rushed to the seats, any seats, to witness what they expected to be Spartan revenge for a Week Three loss to Durham at Jurassic Park.

But by the time most of the fans had made it to the stands toward the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, they were shocked and dismayed to see the scoreboard reading PICKERING 3 DURHAM 14. Had they been on hand to see the opening drive, they would have witnessed an overly pumped up Pickering defence getting flagged twice for pass interference and once for unnecessary roughness for a total of 42 penalty yards of an 80-yard opening scoring drive by the Lizards. They would have turned to their neighbour and asked incredulously, “who’s that?” when back-up running back **Toby Gerhart** charged through the Pickering line on his way to an 18-yard touchdown run to finish off the drive. And they might have later asked, “What’s that guy’s name again?” when Gerhart defeated a keying **Nick Roach** to dive into the end zone from 3 yards out with seconds

remaining in the opening period.

That was just the beginning of a humiliating day, in every way, for the previously high-flying Spartans, who had been sitting on an 8-game win streak and apparently at the peak of their considerable powers coming into this all-important game. The Lizards looked in control of this one from the moment Gerhart crossed the goal line for the game’s first points; while Pickering looked a little on edge, a little unfocused, a little too forced. **Chris Johnson** did not have as much room to run, the deep throws were not there early for Peyton, and the defence looked more than a little befuddled.

Spartans coach **Gus Konstantakos**, whose diligence at controlling his blood pressure and his temper this year has been admirable, looked about to burst on the sidelines early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half when yet another long pass fell incomplete and **Ronald Leary** was flagged for a hold. His temples throbbing and his face beet red, he squeezed the dye out of his red challenge flag, (turning it a light orange), as he walked purposefully to the player’s bench and very deliberately placed his entire head inside a Gatorade cooler. He did not remove it for about a minute, prompting a brave and concerned trainer to tap him on the shoulder. As calmly as he inserted it, Gus removed his head from the cooler, blue Gatorade streaming from his hair,



Rarely-used **Toby Gerhart** was Durham’s secret weapon in a confident 41-24 rout of the Spartans in Week Thirteen. Here he is cutting through the line and into the second level on his way to an 18-yard TD run that opened the scoring for the Lizards.

and bellowed ‘NNNEVEEERRRR SSSUURRREENNDDDEEERRR!’

But the defiance had no significant effect. The Lizards fought off a late push by the Spartans by sending Gerhart off left tackle for 15 yards on 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 at the Pickering 38 while in front by two scores with 7 minutes left in the game. The drive continued for almost 4 more minutes before a 24-yard field goal by **Phil Dawson** made it a three-score game. It would be too much of a deficit for the Spartans to overcome on a day when **Richard Sherman** was putting a collar and leash on **Demaryius Thomas**. Durham went on to post a 41-24 win and wrested back control of its destiny. But, more importantly for the Greek Diaspora, the *Royal Greek Society* won an important battle in its “Poet War” with the *Hellenic Cultural Centre*.

#### AROUND THE EFL

The Corn Kings are back in the hunt for a wildcard berth after giving up a 10-point lead then coming from behind in the final minute to surprise York at Camelot 23-20. "**Joe Flacco** had a great day and may have saved the Corn Kings' season," wrote **Orville Smucker** of the *Cowtown Plain Dealer*. "His game-winning TD pass to **Cecil Shorts** made the national highlight reel, but his gritty overall performance set it up. With the offensive line struggling mightily for the third straight week, Joe Cool avoided being pressured into mistakes and made critical plays when his team needed them." That about sums it up, Orville. I might add that Flacco's late heroics would not have been necessary if the officiating crew hadn't sold their souls to keep **Tom Brady** going on the 76-yard touchdown drive that put York in front 20-16 with 3:26 left.

Suddenly, without warning, the Hellfire won on the road this week, beating Carthage 41-28. Yes, that's right: Carthage.....*division leading* Carthage! A couple of things happened that allowed this unexpected outcome. First, the Cannibals got away from their run game early, allowing the Mohave blitz to pressure **Philip Rivers** into mistakes, including a 30-yard 'pick-six' into the hands of safety **Dawan Landry**. Second, **Tandon Doss** pulled off an 80-yard punt return for a touchdown, tipping the balance on a day when both offences were able to score. An upbeat **Bobby Elder**, apparently invigorated by his team's stunning 41-28 upset of the Cannibals on the road, boldly predicted a 5-win finish for the Hellfire at his post game presser. To achieve this would mean beating the Triumph in Minnesota in two weeks. Good luck with that, Bobby!

At the Carolina Slammer, the Regulators looked far from a playoff team in their underwhelming 17-14 overtime victory over Scarborough. The disparity in yardage in favour of South Carolina was predictable, but two critical interceptions thrown by the heartbeat of the offence made this more of a nail-biter than fans in Columbia would have liked. Credit the Blue Eagles with bringing pressure to bear in those situations and forcing the bad throws from **Tony Romo**. **Terrelle Pryor** brought his usual inaccuracy to the passing game, but he did not turn the ball over once, which was a big factor in keeping this game within reach until a bad snap from the Eagles' **Jon Condo** in overtime gave the Regs the ball at the Blue Eagles' 15 to set up a gift 33-yard game-winning field goal by **Justin Tucker**. A win is a win, but nobody in Carolina is smiling about it.

For the third straight week **LeSean McCoy** rushed for over 160 yards, gaining 171 yards on 33 carries and scoring 2 touchdowns as the Gladiators edged the Swordfish 27-24 at the Fish Tank. Sebastian compensated for an unsteady offence by recovering an onside kick in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and taking a 10-7 lead on the ensuing drive. But the Glads are simply too star-studded to be held in place by the Fish (can you believe I said that?). A 19-yard run by McCoy and a 23-yard pass from **Big Ben** to **Reggie Wayne** ignited a 78-yard touchdown drive for the winning score.

At Round Table Stadium in LA, Coach **Jeff Dohrn** figured, (as most coaches with slow-moving offences do when facing a high-powered offence), keeping the ball out of his opponent's hands would be the key to success. When his plan seemed to work early in the game there was a fleeting moment when stupefaction took hold of whatever small portion of the national television audience happened to be watching. A 20-play drive lasting 11:54 to start the game netted 68 yards a 3 points for the Knights, a nice start. But that was all the over-matched Knights could manage against the most talented team in the conference. The conservative Sluggs went on to grind out a 28-3 win to remain a game in front of Chino in the West Division.

The Mustangs experienced their toughest challenge of the season but survived with their perfect season intact and a lock on the #1 seed in the Can-Am Conference playoffs with a 17-13 victory at the Dawg Pound in Markham. The moribund Star's offence was propped up when **Calais Campbell** blocked a **Sam Koch** punt at the end of Aurora's first series and **Bennie Logan** recovered the ball in the end zone for a quick 7-0 Markham lead. While the Stars' went through the motions on offence, (none of those motions involving forward movement), two of the next three Mustangs' drives ended in Markham interceptions of **Matt Ryan**. But the Mustangs cashed in on the middle of those three drives, tying the game on a 4-yard touchdown run by fullback **Darrel Young**. The Stars managed to paw their way to a 13-10 lead early in the fourth quarter before crashing down to earth when **Earl Thomas** picked off **Alex Smith**. Five plays later, **Riley Cooper** caught a 29-yard TD pass for the win.

Viriden's faint hopes for the post-season ended in Twin Cities with a 31-7 collapse against the Triumph. **Doug Martin** returned in a big way, giving coach **Guy Williams** a 114-yard rushing day and a pair of touchdowns. **Matt Stafford** committed 4 turnovers, 3 interceptions and a fumble, to give coach **Lance Barrate** another colossal headache.

At Patriot Place in Charleswood the young Pats rookies texted in their performance as the Cubs won their fifth straight game, 30-7. It was the third win in as many games for **Colin Kaepernick**, prompting some to call for him to be the starter going forward. *Really?* Fans can be so stupid...especially fans in Iowa!

And finally, we end the week in Chino, where the Monarchs moved slowly and uncertainly while the Convicts charged forward confidently to prevail 38-20 and maintain their hold on the first wild card in the PAC. Is it just me, or are there others like me who think that the Monarchs, as a team, aren't as bad as their QB, **Ryan Tannehill**?

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RECORD VS THE SPREAD AFTER WEEK 13:

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## PLAYOFF PICTURE AT A GLANCE

PACIFIC-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE		CAN-AM CONFERENCE			
OUT	ALIVE	IN	IN	ALIVE	OUT
		1			
		2			
		3			
		4			

## JIMMY'S WEEK FOURTEEN PICKS

### GAMES TO WATCH

**IOWA CITY @ SANTA CLARA (line – BANANA SLUGGS by 4)**

**INJURIES:** Iowa City –Tavon Austin (OUT), Tyvon Branch (OUT), Casey Hayward (OUT), Stephon Gilmore (OUT), Jamar Taylor (OUT); Santa Clara –Randall Cobb (OUT), Rob Gronkowski (OUT), Brandon Williams (OUT);

The last time these teams met they accumulated nearly 1000 yards of net offence and hung up a total of 82 points in a 48-34 Santa Clara victory. While the Sluggs have the second-highest scoring offence in the league, the Cubs have the most efficient offence, averaging 6.5 yards-per-play. The Cubs would probably score a lot more if their defence did not spend so much time on the field. The Iowa defence surrenders an average of 363 yards per game and is the most penalized unit in the league; the sole category they

rank high in is no. 2 in rushing yards allowed, and that is only because opponents are too busy passing for big gains against the flabby Cubs' secondary. On the other side, the Sluggs' defence has been gashed on the ground this year for almost 1900 total yards at 4.9 yards per carry – a stat that makes the stable of thoroughbred Iowa running threats, led by CJ Spiller, drain water like racehorses in anticipation. The pass rush is the strong suit in Santa Clara's defensive game plan, but this week they face one of the league's best quarterbacks at evading the rush, Russell Wilson (assuming that he starts, of course). A win for the Cubbies here and they are one big step closer to stealing the West Division; a loss and they will be relegated to a wild card berth at best. The Sluggs can clinch a playoff berth with a win here and clinch the West Division with a win and a Chino loss. Clay Matthews is back for Santa Clara, which is bad news for Cubs' right tackle Riley Reiff and good news for the Sluggs' pass rush. Bet the "over" on this one – whatever it is – and go with the Cubs to cover in a game too close to call a winner. **PICK: IOWA CITY**

### **MARKHAM @ COWTOWN (line – CORN KINGS by 3)**

**INJURIES:** Markham – Anthony Fasano (DOUBTFUL), Owen Daniels (OUT), Jordan Reed (OUT); Cowtown –Ryan Clady (PROBABLE), Zack Miller (PROBABLE); Mike Evans (OUT).

The season hangs in the balance for the North Stars as they face elimination on the field of one of their many arch foes. A win guarantees nothing apart from another chance, but a loss will mean the end of post-season plans for the two-time Conference Champs. The Stars are in this position because they cannot score enough points and their defence is beginning to show the strain of having to hold up the testudinal pace of an Alex Smith-run offence. The 7-6 Corn Kings are stuck behind 7-6 South Carolina in the quest for the final wild card spot due to an inferior conference record; they need to keep winning and hope for help along the way. One of the positives about Smith is the lack of big mistakes, i.e., turnovers. Markham has turned the ball over just 7 times all year and taken it away 17 times. The Corn Kings have handed the ball over a whopping 24 times compared with just 14 takeaways of their own. Apart from presenting a mystery as to how Cowtown remains in contention, the disparity in turnover differential in favour of Markham points to how the visitors can literally steal a game on Cowtown's home turf and stay in the playoff picture. These teams have a habit of playing each other hard in the other team's park. Bet on this one being really close either way. **PICK: MARKHAM**

### **YORK @ DURHAM (line – THUNDER LIZARDS by 8)**

**INJURIES:** York –Robert Geathers (OUT), Rashean Mathis (OUT); Durham –Marquise Goodwin (QUESTIONABLE).

The Excaliburs can get closer to the playoff limelight with an upset at Durham. But since they currently lose the tie-breakers against their potential rivals, to get a clear step ahead of the traffic in the wild card hunt they would need that win to be accompanied by losses for Cowtown and South Carolina. Now that the Lizards have nudged past the Spartans for the lead in the North Division, they cannot afford any more stumbles of the kind they experienced in Week Seven against the Cubs. For the first time since Week Eight, they control their own destiny and, since they control all the tie-breakers against the clutch of wannabe wildcards behind them, the Lizards can clinch a playoff berth with a win. Durham appears to be gearing up for the post-season early, if last week's dominant showing against Pickering is an accurate reflection of their confidence. The York defence is showing up every week but the offence has been playing peekaboo, hiding one week and showing up the next. The Lizards' defence held off Peyton Manning when it mattered; they should not struggle to hold down a Tom Brady hamstrung by having just two viable outside targets in the passing game. York is on the edge and will play with greater urgency. But if it turns to desperation watch out; it could be a long afternoon. **PICK: DURHAM**

## **GAMES OF NOTE**

### **SOUTH CAROLINA @ SEBASTIAN (line – REGULATORS by 3)**

**INJURIES:** South Carolina – Sam Acho (OUT), Chris Cook (OUT), Bradley Fletcher (OUT), Sam Shields (OUT). Sebastian – Patrick Chung (OUT), Leon Hall (OUT), Rahim Moore (OUT), Derek Wolfe (OUT);

As the odds of playoff prime time become more promising, the Regulators seem more prone to errors. They have risen to 7-6 at the expense of weak teams and have failed to win a single game against a team with a winning record. It is hard to escape the feeling that they are buckling under the pressure of high expectations after the debacle that was last week's unworthy win over

the Blue Eagles. While the Swordfish might be the worst team in a weak division, they are at home, playing loose and will benefit from the over-charged reflexive impulses of their nervous opponent. This is one of those rare games where the Swordfish look the more confident team heading into the game. That could change quickly if Frank Gore and Tony Romo take charge early, but if the Regulators fail to get off to a quick start it could cause some very nervous moments at the end. South Carolina struggles early in halves, scoring a combined 92 points in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters, while tallying 222 points in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. This game will be close for a lot longer than it should be, but expect Romo to show up to finish off the Fish in the end. **PICK: SOUTH CAROLINA**

### **CARTHAGE @ VIRDEN (line – VIOLATORS by 2)**

**INJURIES:** **Carthage** – Earl Wolff (QUESTIONABLE), Stefen WISNIEWSKI (DOUBTFUL), Rashad Johnson (OUT), Kyle Rudolph (OUT), Harrison Smith (OUT); **Virden** – Branden Albert (OUT), Melvin Ingram (OUT), Justin Blackmon (OUT), Julio Jones (OUT);

The idea that Virden is a good team persists in betting circles. Out of the playoff race and neurotic about passing the ball with the Turnover King at quarterback, the Violators are startling favourites against the Division-leading Cannibals. Apprehension that Philip Rivers is returning to his pre-Cannibal days was not lessened by his performance in defeat against the Hellfire last week. That and the 282 yards the Carthage defence surrendered to the struggling Andrew Luck have fans willing to risk that the explosive Virden passing game won't blow itself up this week. While it is not a must-win for Carthage, a loss will make the final stretch much more exciting than the easy-going Samoan fans would like. The Violators have nothing to play for but spite, a sentiment abundantly present and poisoning the atmosphere at TERRORDOME these days. Virden leads the league in fan ejections this year, pushing historically unruly Chino down into 2<sup>nd</sup> place for the first time since 2011. With pure malice charging up their blood, expect the Violators to show fans what could have been. **PICK: VIRDEN**

### **MISSION VIEJO @ TWIN CITIES (line – TRIUMPH by 9)**

**INJURIES:** **Mission Viejo** – Brandon Browner (QUESTIONABLE), Brian Cushing (OUT), Duke Ihenacho (OUT), Russell Okung (OUT), Mike Williams (OUT). **Twin Cities** – Henry Melton (OUT).

There is not much to like about the Monarchs heading into this game – they aren't scoring many points and they aren't very good at preventing opponents from scoring on them. Sometimes evaluating a team can be that simple. But add the road game, the injuries to Duke Ihenacho and Russell Okung, and the lack of wide receiver talent and you have a recipe for Mashed Monarchs. The Triumph are motivated to win this game, hoping to be in a position to resolve the North Division in the ultimate showdown with Carthage in the season's final week. They are almost 100% healthy and looking strong after Jay Cutler posted his second consecutive multi-touchdown game without an interception and Doug Martin broke the 100-yard mark rushing for the first time in 2014. There is absolutely no logical reason to think that Twin Cities will do less than manhandle the Monarchs. But, for some other reason, I am not comfortable with the 9-point spread. Call it the Bad-Cutler-Uncertainty-Principle, or call it the Ryan-Tannehill-is-Fed-up-and-not-going-to-Take-it-Anymore Factor, or call it something else equally unfounded in statistical analytical principles. Call it "football" on "any given Sunday." **PICK: MISSION VIEJO**

## **HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS**

### **CHINO @ LOS ANGELES (line – CONVICTS by 10)**

**INJURIES:** **Chino** – DeMarcus Ware (PROBABLE), Bruce Carter (OUT), Jarvis Jenkins (OUT), Jamarca Sanford (OUT); **Los Angeles** – None.

One of the Knights' better losses in a season full of them came in Week Two against these Convicts. They moved the ball decently, forced three turnovers, and would have beaten this week's spread. So if things seemed to go right for LA in a 27-19 loss, imagine how horrible it might look if luck is not on their side this week. With Santa Clara still remaining on their schedule and a good shot at the retaking the division, the Convicts will not want to leave a game like this to chance. Expect them to stay within themselves on offence and not take many big shots down field as they trust in their defence to hold off the pool noodle-like thrusts of the Knights' offence. But the Convicts should be careful not to become overly conservative. The 'Blue Shield' is much better than its team's record and its statistical performance. One too many three-and-outs for Chino could turn into an inspiration for its deflated opponent. **PICK: CHINO**

## SCARBOROUGH @ PICKERING (line – SPARTANS by 11)

**INJURIES:** Scarborough – Nate Burleson (QUESTIONABLE), Kroy Biermann (OUT), Tarell Brown (OUT), Will Hill (OUT), D.J. Williams (OUT); Pickering – Charles Tillman (OUT).

The Spartans still have to be feeling the sting of the lashing they sustained at the tails of the Lizards last week. How much this will factor into what looks like an easy game against down-trodden Scarborough this week won't be known for sure until they take the field. It is hard to imagine the Spartans not coming away with a win here, but it is no stretch to think that the return of Aaron Rodgers for the Eagles will make this a much more interesting victory. Often overlooked in a season of more obvious failings, is the capacity of the Scarborough front seven to generate pressure and its willingness to blitz. This could have been one of the league's top 5 defences if it had even one decent corner. But it's too late now – the Eagles will have to get to Peyton Manning or spend an afternoon chasing Pierre Garçon and Demaryus Thomas into the end zone. **PICK: PICKERING**

## CHARLESWOOD @ MOHAVE (line – HELLFIRE by 4)

**INJURIES:** Charleswood – Michael Crabtree (OUT), Jerod Mayo (OUT), Anthony Spencer (OUT), Daryl Washington (OUT), Vince Wilfork (OUT). Mohave – Amini Silatolu (OUT);

The Patriots are done and the Hellfire are just getting started apparently. Bobby Elder's prediction of a 5-win season faces its first test this week and it is a test similar in difficulty to the skill-testing question one might have to answer when one wins the sweepstakes.  $22 - 14 + 13 - 6 =$  how many more times the Pats have lost the ball than they have taken it away from their opponents. The Hellfire, at  $17 - 9 + 9 - 10$  aren't great, but nevertheless much better than Charleswood at keeping control of the ball; not that turnovers should factor much in the outcome of this game. Blake Bortles looks shell-shocked and the Hellfire pass rush will be like another artillery barrage. Mohave is out to prove....well....I'm not sure exactly what they are out to prove. But whatever it is sure involves winning – something they should do without difficulty this week. **PICK: MOHAVE**

## AURORA @ GWINNETT (line – MUSTANGS by 13)

**INJURIES:** Aurora – Duane Brown (OUT), Arian Foster (OUT); Gwinnett – Lance Briggs (PROBABLE), Tommy Kelly (OUT), Maurkice Pouncey (OUT), Jabaal Sheard (OUT);

With a playoff berth and the no. 1 seed locked up, all the Mustangs have left to play for is the much-coveted *perfect season*. This has been achieved only once, by Florida in 2010. But before Aurora pulls out the stops to become only the second team to achieve the epitome of regular season achievement, they might pause to consider that those Dragons of 2010 were eliminated in the Conference Championship Game by none other than the Pickering Spartans, a team that figures, if all goes according to plan, to be in that very game this year. But with the Glads, the Regs and the Eagles remaining on their schedule, a perfect season for Aurora might be unavoidable. If they hope to lose and avoid “the curse of perfection,” it won't be this week. **PICK: AURORA**



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FROM THE EFL ARCHIVES – Week Eleven of the 2008 EFL season featured one of the most exciting games of the regular season to that point. With lots of offence and multiple lead changes, it was a great game on its own. But what made it most compelling was that it was a significant upset. One week after defending their perfect season by ruining another, the Florida Dragons fell 36-34 in the final seconds to the Chino Convicts on a 38-yard FG by **Jeff Reed**. It was a chippy, physical game, with 24 penalty flags thrown. But it was also a display of skill as **LaDainian Tomlinson** ran for 118 yards, **Tom Brady** threw for 359

yards, (but also 3 interceptions), and **Joshua Cribbs** racked up 293 total return yards, including an 88-yard punt return for a TD. The team thought to be unbeatable after dropping the Patriots showed it could be stopped. But the upset had taken a lot of effort, a bit of luck, and some help from the zebras. Nobody was writing the Dragons off as pretenders.

The Patriots, Thunder Lizards, Golden Bears, and Corn Kings all benefitted from facing teams from the 'Expansion Division' winning all 4 games by a combined score of 127-42. The closest contest was a 23-17 besting of Markham by Cowtown that was not really all that close until the North Stars rallied for 10 points in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

The best team not to get regular national attention stopped the Gladiators, 26-16. The Cubs' **Mario Williams** sacked **Carson Palmer** twice in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter to keep the Glads at bay as Iowa City pulled away in the final period.

A shootout in Mohave witnessed **Kurt Warner** throw for 331 yards and 6 TD passes to lead the Hellfire to a 45-32 victory over the talented but poorly coached Anchorage Buccaneers. Warner's performance was enough to win him Offensive Player of the Week Honours.